

### **Grandparents as Foster Parents Program (GAFP)**

This program was created in 1997 to provide payments at the foster care payment level to grandparents who are raising their minor grandchildren and are the legal guardians. In 1999, Senate Bill 387 expanded the GAFP Program to include:

1. Grandparents who have legal guardianship or legal custody.
2. Other kin when no grandparent is available to participate in the program.
3. Grandparents under age 50. (Please see definitions below for additional information.)

Agency policy will grant grandparents and other kin a period of six (6) months to complete the court process. They may be granted additional time under extenuating circumstances.

The goal of the GAFP program is to promote permanency for the child by helping to solidify the placement when the permanency goal is for the child to remain in the grandparent or other kin's home. The Family Support Division and Children's Division will jointly administer this program through funding from Temporary Assistance (TA).

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the program is to provide a financial mechanism to pay grandparents/other kin by the same standard allowed foster parents and, in this way, help secure a permanent home for the child(ren). This program is for families for whom the permanency goal is that the child remain in the home of the grandparent or other kin. Suitability of the placement already has been or will be determined based on the award of guardianship or custody by a court of competent jurisdiction.

#### **Definitions:**

The term "grandparent" for this program will also include persons of preceding generations as denoted by prefixes of "great" or "great great". A step-grandparent would also meet the relationship requirement in some situations. For example, the spouse of a child's biological grandparent is an eligible relationship; the parent of a child's stepparent is not.

The term "other kinship", for this program, will include the same persons (other than a grandparent) who meet the definition of kinship for the purposes of the temporary assistance program.

This includes children living with the following:

1. Any blood kinship including those of half-blood, and including first cousins, first cousins of parents, nephews, or nieces. Relationships to persons of

preceding generations as denoted by prefixes of grand, great, or great great, are within this definition;

2. Stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister;
3. Persons legally adopting a child or adopting the parent of a child, and other kinship by adoption meeting the criteria established for blood kinship (biological kinship of an adopted child remain eligible payees); and
4. Spouses of any persons named above (consider such kinship within the scope of this provision even though death or divorce terminates the marriage).

The term “legal guardian” for this program refers to the legal guardianship established by a probate court under the provision of the probate court code of the Missouri Revised Statutes. Proof of legal guardianship can be shown by a court document signed by a judge or commissioner.

The term “legal custodian” for this program refers to a person being granted legal custody of a child by a court of competent jurisdiction, including the juvenile court or a family court.

**Eligibility:**

Eligibility will continue to be determined in the Family Support Division following the procedures established by CS97-56/IM-#126.

There are two groups of eligible persons:

- Group 1: Grandparents or other kinships, age 50 and over, the following eligibility requirements must be met:

NOTE: Other kinships may be eligible for the GAFP Program, if there are no grandparents available to participate in the program.
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- A. The grandparent or kinship must have been granted legal guardianship or legal custody of the minor grandchild (or show proof that a petition has been filed in court to obtain legal custody or legal guardianship);
- B. Grandparents or kinships are eligible to begin receiving GAFP benefits upon making application if they have legal guardianship or have filed a petition for legal guardianship. However, within six (6) months both grandparents are required to complete foster parent training unless one grandparent is prohibited from attending due to a hardship; and

- C. The child must meet an income test. (The need, income, and resources of the kinship caretakers are not considered unless they are also receiving public assistance.)
- D. Complete the process of obtaining legal custody or legal guardianship within six (6) months.

Group 2: For grandparents who are either under 50 years of age, or 50 years of age or older but refuse to participate in foster parent training, the following eligibility requirements must be met and the following conditions apply:

- A. The grandparent must have been granted legal guardianship or legal custody of the minor child (or show proof that a petition has been filed in court to obtain legal custody or legal guardianship);
- B. Grandparents are eligible to begin receiving GAFP benefits upon making application if they have legal guardianship or have filed a petition for legal guardianship.
- C. The child must meet an income test; (The need, income and resources of the kinship caretakers are not considered unless they are also receiving public assistance.)
- D. Persons in this eligibility group will receive the same benefits as all other groups except that the following items will not be available:
  - Respite care;
  - Clothing allowance; and
  - Transportation.
- E. The GAFP five (5) year limit for benefits will apply to this group. (NOTE: If the grandparent reaches the age of 50 during the five-year GAFP time limit and attends the required training, he/she will continue to be eligible for GAFP benefits, and will also be eligible for respite care, clothing allowance and transportation); and
- F. Participation in a mandatory work/training component is required. The receipt of the required foster parent training may be considered towards meeting the mandatory work requirement.

#### **Covered Services:**

Except where noted above, the grandparents/kinship caretakers are eligible for services including parenting skills training, counseling, child care, respite care, mileage reimbursement, and any other service that may be provided to a foster parent. The child

is covered by Medicaid and is eligible for counseling, clothing allowance, and any other payment that may be offered to a foster child. Legal fees (attorney, court, publication and GAL) may be paid for those grandparents/kinships who have filed a petition for custody. Attorney fees may not exceed \$100.00 per hour and the total reimbursement may not exceed \$500.00 per child.

### **Children's Service Worker Responsibilities**

- Form IM-16 will be sent from the Family Support Division to the Children's Division referring the grandparents/other kinships for foster parent training. The Children's Service Worker shall make contact with the grandparents/other kinships within ten (10) working days to give an overview of the foster parent training and enroll them in the next available class. Since a court of competent jurisdiction has awarded the grandparents/other kinships legal guardianship or custody, these caretakers will not be required to meet the STARS competencies or to complete the assessment portion of the training. They are invited to participate in the class sessions as an opportunity to enhance their parenting, but the worker will not be required to complete a home assessment. Grandparents/other kinships will be given the option to complete the entire foster parent training/assessment process if they wish to become licensed. If this is a two-parent household and they are completing the training for the GAFFP Program, both caretakers will be required to complete the training unless illness would make it a hardship.
- The grandparents/other kinships will have six (6) months to complete the training. The Children's Service Worker can grant an extension of up to three (3) more months under extenuating circumstances. At the completion of the foster parent training, the worker will supply written verification to the grandparents/other kinships and will forward a copy of the verification to the family's IM caseworker. It is the responsibility of the worker to keep the IM caseworker apprised of the training status to ensure appropriate payments.
- The Children's Service Worker will be responsible for authorizing payment for any service beyond the monthly maintenance payment. Explain the payment process and explore with the grandparents/other kinships any services that may be available and needed by the family. The worker should negotiate, keeping in mind the case plan of permanency for the child(ren). Not all families will require additional services and many will already have supports in place. The grandparents/other kinships should be encouraged to make contact with the worker if those needs change.
- Write a brief narrative entry that the contact was made and that the grandparent/kinship caretaker was informed of all services and how to access those services.

### **Payment Process:**

Payments should be made directly to vendors whenever possible rather than to the grandparent. The DBF-14 form will need to be used to make these additional service payments and sent to Family Support Division, Central Office.

### **Clothing Allowance:**

When submitting a DBF-14 to pay the vendor directly, such as Wal-Mart, K Mart, J.C. Penney, etc., the original itemized receipt and two copies must be attached. Budget and Finance will no longer accept copies in lieu of the original, even if it is stamped "only original invoice available." The same rule applies if you are reimbursing the grandparent for clothing. You must provide the original, itemized receipt, but in this case, the receipt must show that the grandparent has paid in full, thus justifying the reimbursement.

### **Legal Fees:**

When paying an attorney directly for legal fees on a DBF-14, you must attach an original bill from the attorney stating the service provided and the amount due. If reimbursing the grandparent for legal fees, you must have a receipt from the attorney showing that the grandparent has paid in full, or copies of the front and back of the check that was used to pay the attorney. In this case, copies of the check are sufficient and the original check does not need to be sent.

### **Daycare:**

Although most daycare services provided through GAFP are handled through Family Support Division, occasionally a DBF-14 is submitted for daycare services. If paying the daycare provider directly, the daycare provider must provide a bill stating the number of days attended and the total amount owed. If we are reimbursing the grandparent for daycare services, a receipt showing the grandparent has paid in full and/or a copy of the front and back of the check must be provided.

### **Mileage:**

If reimbursing for approved mileage, the grandparent must provide a statement showing where they went, the number of miles for each trip, and the total amount to be reimbursed.

### **Respite:**

When paying a respite provider directly, the original bill from the respite provider, showing the number of days provided and the total amount due, must be attached to the DBF-14. It must be directly from the respite provider with his/her name and address on it, the name of the child and the grandparent. If reimbursing the grandparent for respite, you must have a receipt from the respite provider showing it has been paid in full by the grandparent.

TITLE: CHILD WELFARE MANUAL  
SECTION 4: OUT-OF-HOME CARE  
CHAPTER 12: KINSHIP CARE  
ATTACHMENT A: GRANDPARENTS AS FOSTER PARENTS PROGRAM  
EFFECTIVE DATE:  
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In order to have the vendors set up in Budget and Finance's system, it is necessary to include the following information on the vendor:

- Is the vendor a private organization?
- Is the vendor not-for-profit?
- Is the vendor tax exempt?
- The taxpayer identification number (or Social Security number)
- The vendor's telephone number

It will be necessary to attach an original and three (3) copies of an invoice to each DBF-14 form. The form will need to be signed by an individual in the county office who has authorization to do so. Also, in order to ensure that these costs are charged to the correct appropriation, it is important that the following SAM II cost centers are used:

**For Child Care Payments:**

2000 0101 886  
Appropriation: 4487 Function: X044  
Reporting Category F184

**For Maintenance:**

2000 0101 886  
Appropriation: 4487 Function: X045  
Reporting Category F184

**For all other services:**

2000 0101 886  
Appropriation: 4487 Function: X046  
Reporting Category F184

The completed DBF-14 and invoices should be sent to the Children's Services Payment Unit. The forms will be processed and sent to the Division of Budget and Finance. The vendor will receive payment within approximately 15 working days after Budget and Finance receives the DBF-14. It is important that the provider understands that these particular payments will not be made through the CSIPS system and its three monthly payrolls.

Related Subject: Chapter 11, of this section, Financial Support Planning.
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MEMORANDA HISTORY: